



Picturesque America; or, the land we live in

a delineation by pen and pencil of the mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, water-falls, shores, cañons, valleys, cities, and other picturesque features of our country ; with illustrations on steel and wood, by eminent American artists

Bryant, William Cullen

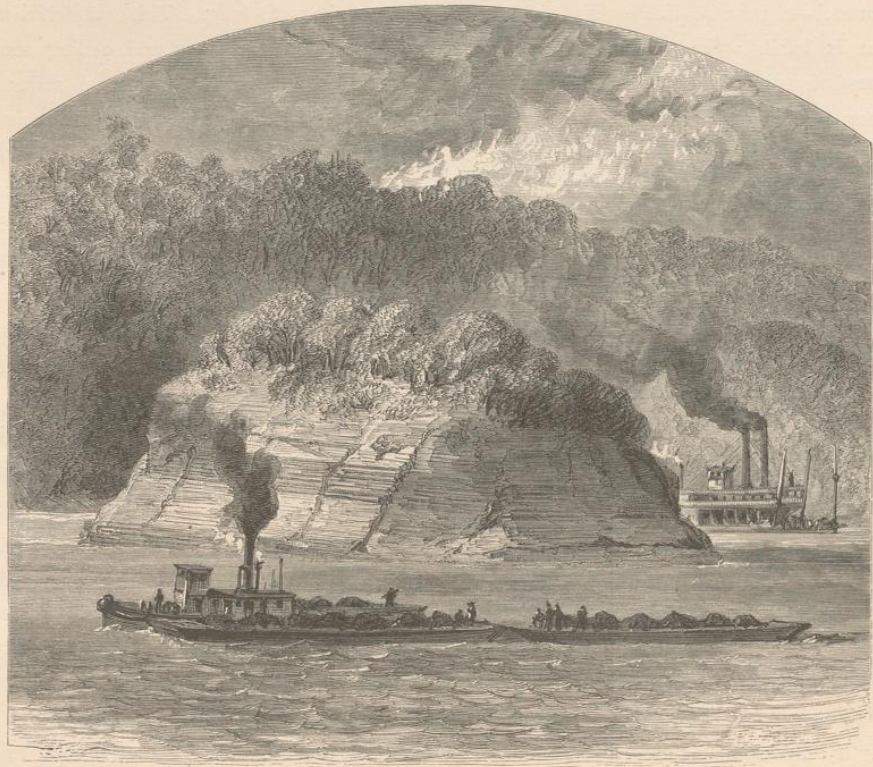
New York, 1874

The Upper Mississippi.

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THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI, FROM ST. LOUIS TO ST.
ANTHONY'S FALLS.

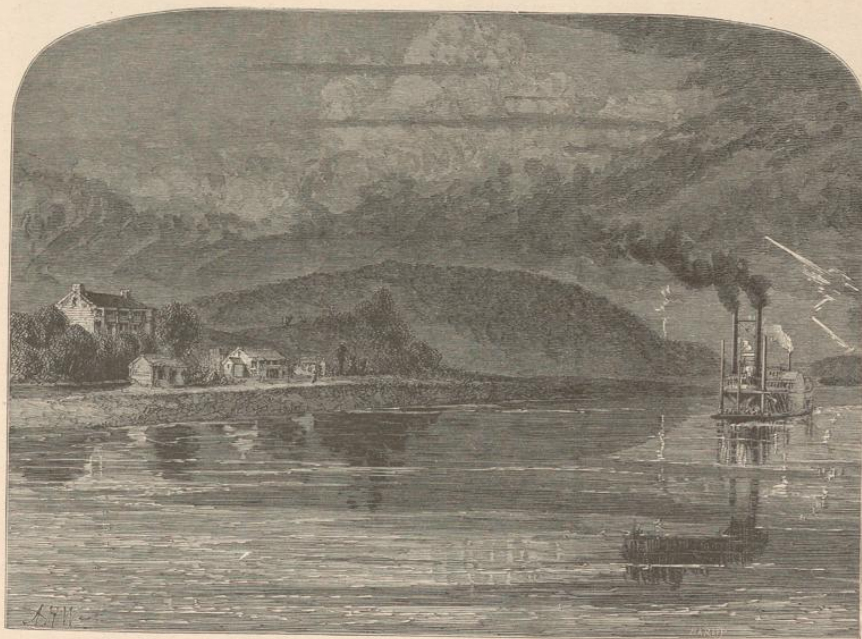
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED R. WAUD.



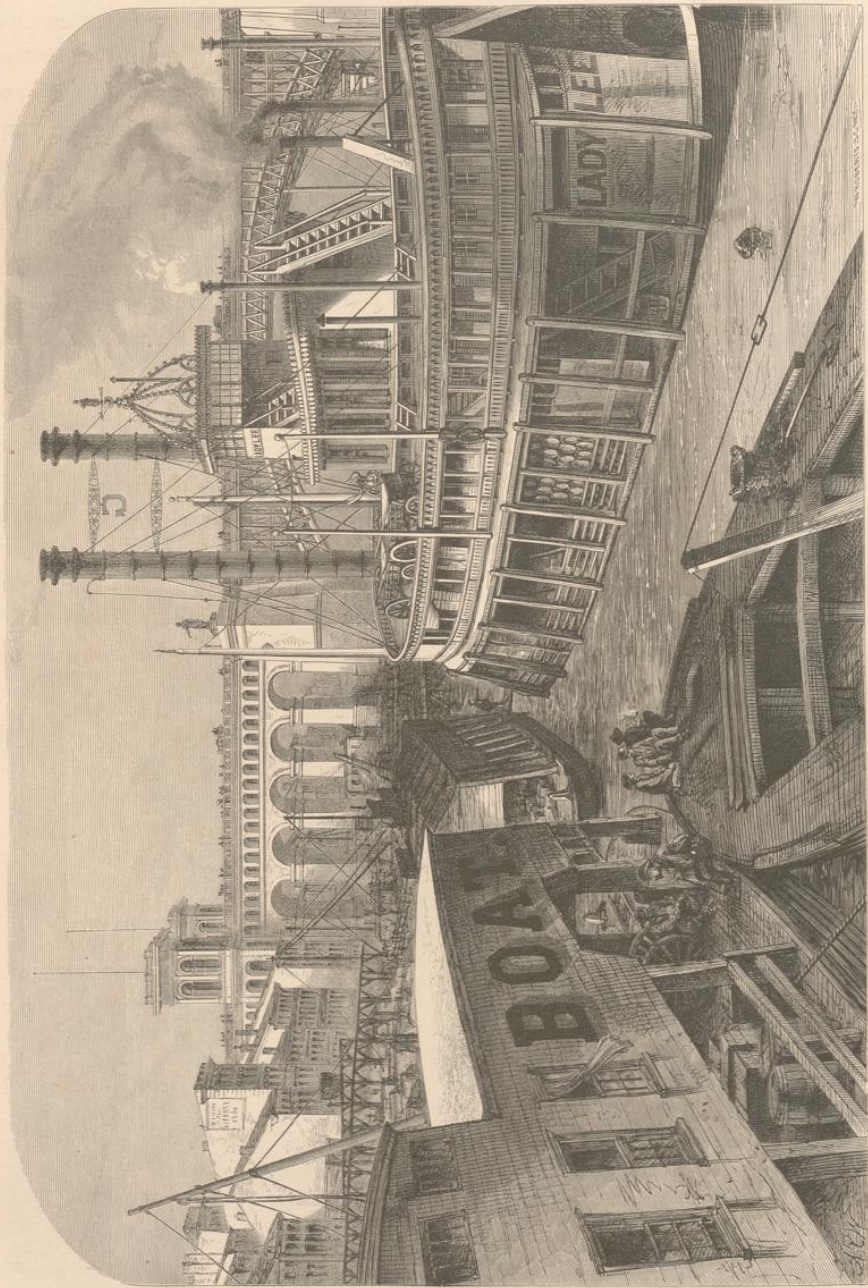
Grand-Tower Rock, below St. Louis.

IN the description of American scenery the Mississippi River, as of royal right, claims a leading place. It is our Nile, our mythic stream, with which are connected all the golden-hued tales of the early travellers. Monsters like Scylla, whirlpools like Charybdis, were reported to lurk in its waters, eager to seize upon the canoes of adventurous travellers, and drag them below its whelming flood. The voices of spirits—messengers of the awful Man-i-tou—reverberated from bluff to bluff, or issued with grewsome sound from the dismal evergreens of its southern banks. The tribes that hunted on its bordering prairies were cannibals, false in friendship, implacable in war, having the tomahawk ever brandished, and the arrow-point poisoned. But, if there were these dreadful things

to encounter, there were also prizes worth the winning. There were regions entirely of flowers, where the foot crushed at every movement the rarest blossoms; there were nooks inhabited by fairy beings of extreme beauty, and prompt to form the tenderest connections with the brave knights who dared all dangers to seek them. These were, like the gardens of the enchantress Armida, of supernatural beauty, tinted by a purple glamour that was akin to the atmosphere of Paradise. The blooms never faded, the turf never withered, the trees never shed their leaves, in these bowers of enchantment—these gracious climes, where all was well. In the midst of this happy land was a golden fountain, in whose waters whosoever bathed issued forth restored to his first radiant youth. The wrinkles upon the brow faded away; the thin cheek became plump and rounded; the shrunken limbs resumed their graceful outlines; the few gray locks that straggled over the worn brow were at once luxuriant and golden, or jetty black, or silky brown. Here was the material paradise, here the rest so dear to the wanderer, here that perfect calm which the unquiet heart seeks and shall find only in heaven. Whatever the spirit longed for unavailingly was said to exist here, in the region of the *Michesepe*. Expedition after expedition, under Spanish auspices, struck out from Florida to find the unknown land, watched over by ampler, bluer skies than had been known to mortals. While De Soto discovered the river in the south, the first white men who reached its northern portion were two Frenchmen from the North—Father Marquette and



Devil's Backbone, below St. Louis.



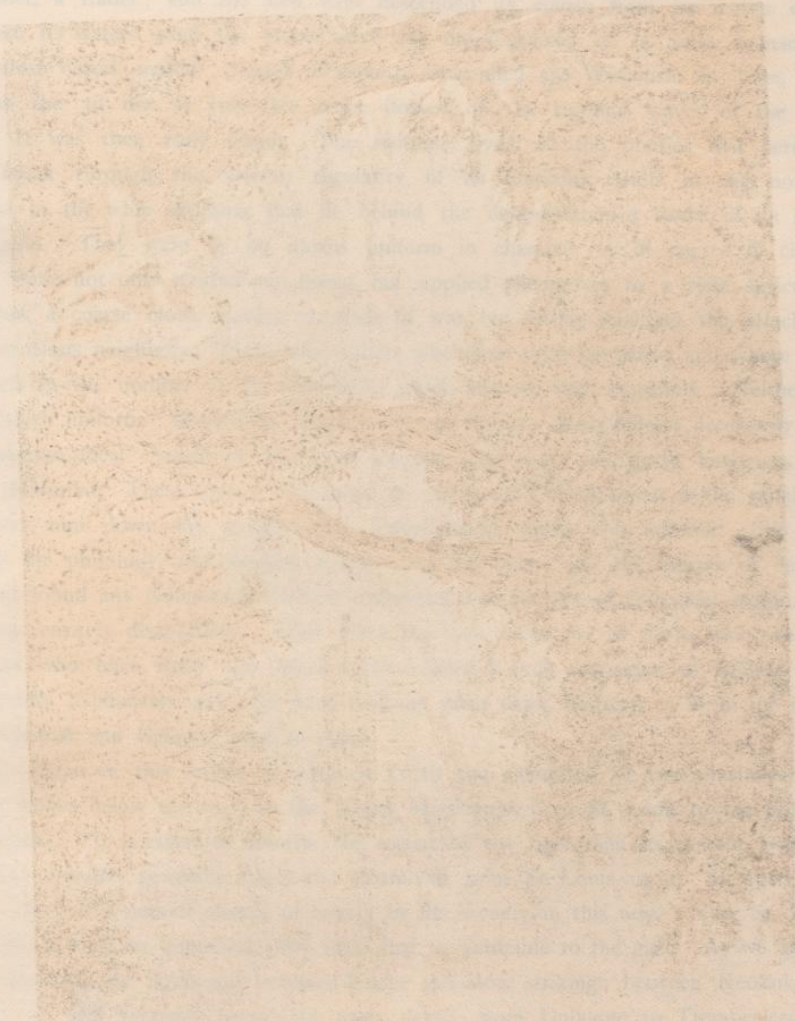
THE LEVEE AT ST. LOUIS.



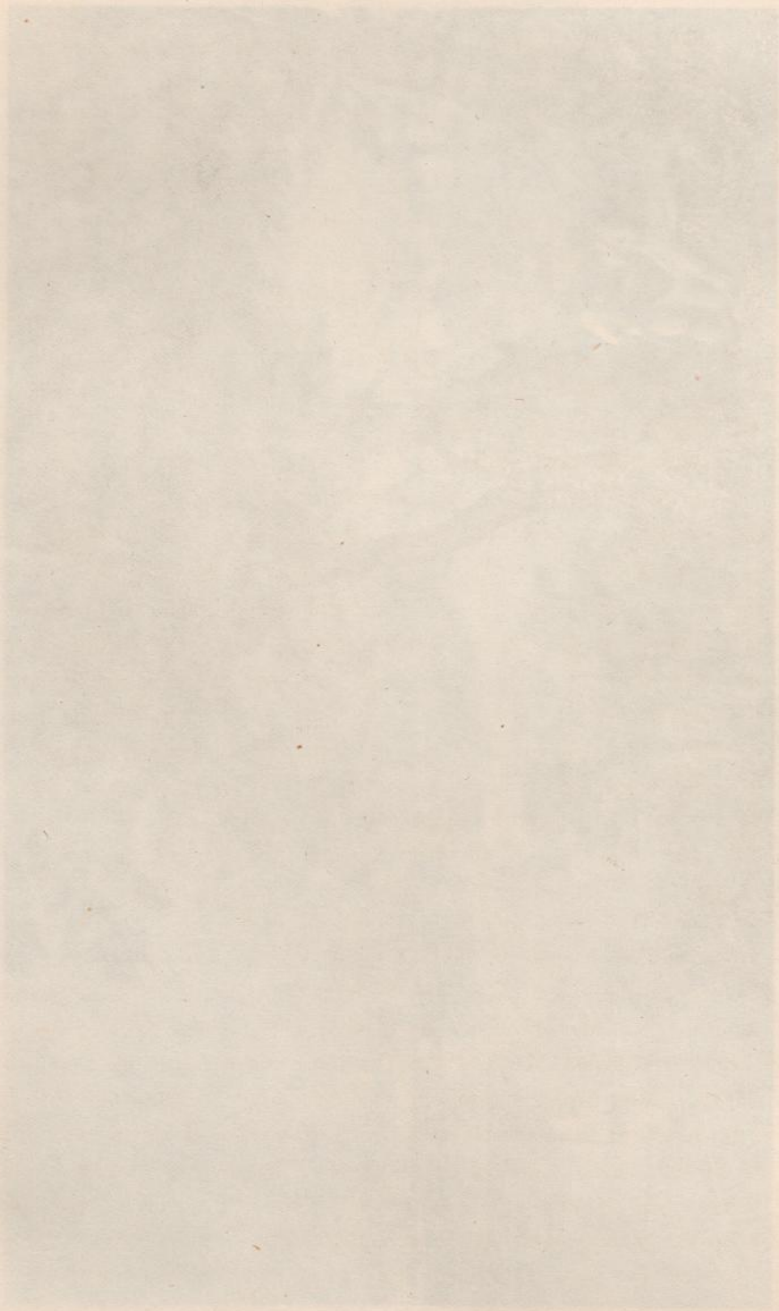
City of St. Louis.

New York, D. Appleton & Co.

THE CITY OF MISSISSIPPI

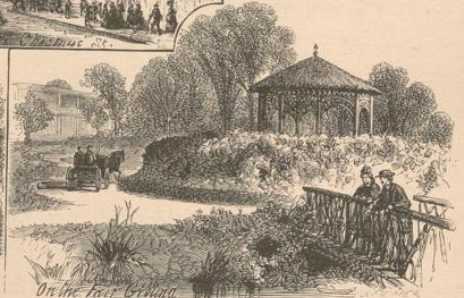
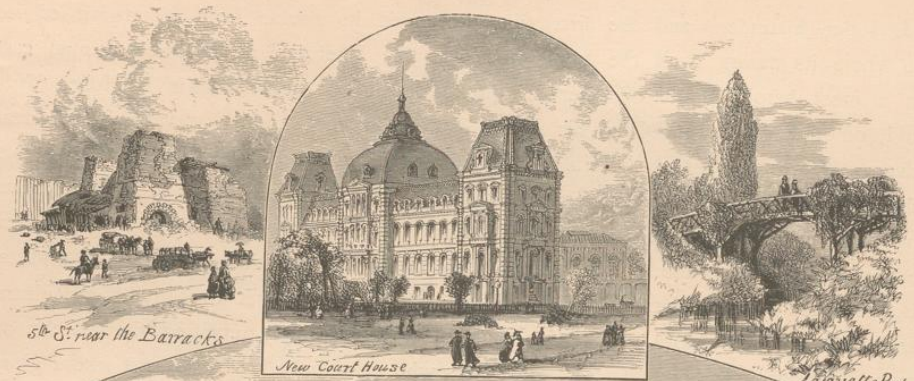


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M. Joliet, a trader; and the first who descended its course from its region of ice to where its waters swell the tropic wave was the Chevalier de la Salle, a man cast in a most heroic mould. Father Marquette descended the Wisconsin in June, 1673; and, on the 3d day of July, his canoe floated on the rippling waves of the great river. It was then truly virgin. The red-men lived on the prairies that here and there break through the solemn regularity of its limestone walls in the northern part, or in the wide savannas that lie behind the densely-wooded banks of its southern region. They were by no means uniform in character or in degree of civilization. Some not only hunted and fished, but applied themselves to a rude agriculture, and spun a coarse cloth, making no trade of war, but simply repelling the attacks of more ferocious neighbors. There were others who lived only for battle, and whose glory consisted in the number of the scalp-locks which adorned their wigwams. Neither was their speech uniform. Besides the great variety of dialects which follows necessarily from the immense local changes of unwritten tongues, there were two great languages altogether dissimilar. These things were noted by the good French priest as the rapid current bore him down the stream; but, unfortunately, those who followed after cared nothing for philology, and modern science now deploras vainly the absence of data on which to found any general conclusions concerning the peoples of this great region, who have now entirely disappeared. Their place has been taken by the thrifty and energetic pale-faces, who have made the Mississippi's borders a long succession of smiling fields and cheerful habitations, and who have built up great cities, destined to be in the future what Nineveh and Babylon were to Asia.

The scope of this article is confined (with the exception of two illustrations of striking scenes below the city) to the Upper Mississippi, from St. Louis to the Falls of St. Anthony. It is easier to describe the ascent of the river than its descent, both because the traveller generally takes the steamboat from St. Louis up to St. Paul, and because there is a natural climax of beauty in the scenery in this way. Near St. Louis the views, it must be confessed, offer little that is admirable to the gaze. As we ascend toward Keokuk, the landscape becomes bolder and more striking; between Keokuk and Dubuque it still becomes more and more grand; from Dubuque to Trempealeau the advantages of Nature are still more enhanced; the scenery of Lake Pepin still strikes an ascending chord, until a culmination of the beautiful is reached in the Falls of St. Anthony and Minnehaha. It is better, therefore, to lead the reader on from that which interests but slightly to things that fairly enchain and enchant, than to commence with the beautiful and simmer slowly down into the absolutely prosaic. We will, therefore, begin with St. Louis (with a glance or two at the high bluffs that are found below the city), premising that the pilots consider this city the termination of the Upper Mississippi, the region between St. Louis and New Orleans constituting the lower river. The city of St. Louis disputes with Chicago the title of Metropolis of the West. But, unlike



ST. LOUIS.



Entrance Shaw's Garden

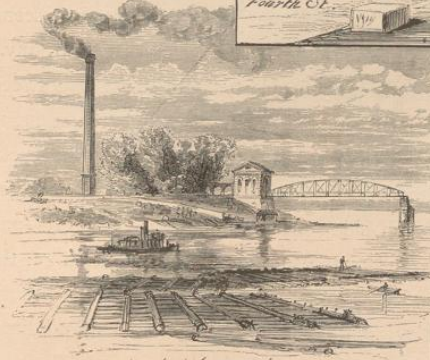
*Helmhaus
Shaw's Garden*



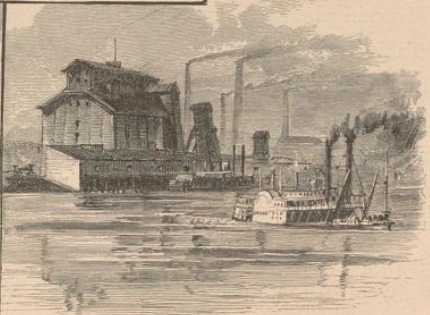
*Eyfl⁶⁶ Ins. Bldg.
Locust St.*

Fourth St.

*High School
Nine Street*



At the Waterworks.



The Elevator.

SCENES IN ST. LOUIS.

its great rival, its history dates back to an early period in American history. It was settled in 1762, by the French; in 1764 its inhabitants numbered one hundred and twenty all told, while its population to-day is believed to be nearly three hundred and fifty thousand. The city is situated on the west bank of the river, on a bluff elevated above the floods of the stream. It is built on two terraces, the first, or lower, rising abruptly about twenty feet from the river, and the second making a more gradual ascent of forty feet from the lower, and spreading out into a wide and beautiful plain. The corporate limits of the city extend over six miles along the river, and from three to four miles back of it. The older streets are narrow, but the new avenues are wide, and those in the resident portions lined with elegant mansions. The public buildings are imposing, the warehouses handsome, the public parks singularly beautiful. Among the famous places are Shaw's Garden, with an extensive botanical garden and conservatory, and the Fair-Grounds. The Fair-Grounds are made the object of special care and cultivation, supplying in a measure the want of a large public park. With an amphitheatre capable of seating twenty thousand persons, an area of over forty acres, filled with choice shrubbery, artificial lakes, fountains, rustic bowers, and numerous handsome structures for the exhibition of goods, it is one of the institutions of which St. Louis is justly proud. Shaw's Gardens are a munificent gift by a wealthy citizen to the public. Here is gathered every variety of tree, shrub, and plant, that can be grown in this country by natural or artificial means. St. Louis is destined for a great future. The magnificent bridge just completed, one of the largest and handsomest in the world, over which all the trains from the East directly enter the city, will have a great effect upon its fortunes. One distinguishing feature of the city is the number of huge steamboats that line its levee; but this feature is scarcely so notable now as it was a generation ago, before railroads had competed with steamboats for freight and passenger traffic. The steamers of the largest class descend the river to New Orleans; smaller ones of light draught ascend the Missouri almost to the mountains, and the Mississippi to the Falls of St. Anthony.

Taking our passage-tickets on one of the handsomely-fitted steamers that ply between St. Louis and St. Paul for at least seven months in the year, the upper river being closed from the middle of November to the middle of April by ice, we turn our backs upon St. Louis, its shot-towers and elevators, its high church-spires, and the magnificent cupola of its capitol. The banks are low on each side—rather higher on the west—and of a sandy brown. The aspects are by no means picturesque, and the junction of the Missouri and the Mississippi is not accompanied by any features of striking beauty. The city of Alton, about three miles above this junction, is perched upon a grand limestone-bluff, nearly two hundred feet high, and of a uniform light-brown color. There is a tradition that there were Indian paintings here, but they have disappeared, if they ever existed. One notices here that the water is much bluer than it was at St. Louis, and that the islands which everywhere dot the broad current have a look of greater age.

Those below seem to have formed themselves within a few months, and the hasty vegetation on them confirms the impression. But here we have the common willow, and occasionally the maple, both growing to a respectable height.

As we proceed upward, the bluffs become more numerous, and at Keokuk begin to gain the appearance of a range of hills with sloping ravines between. One might



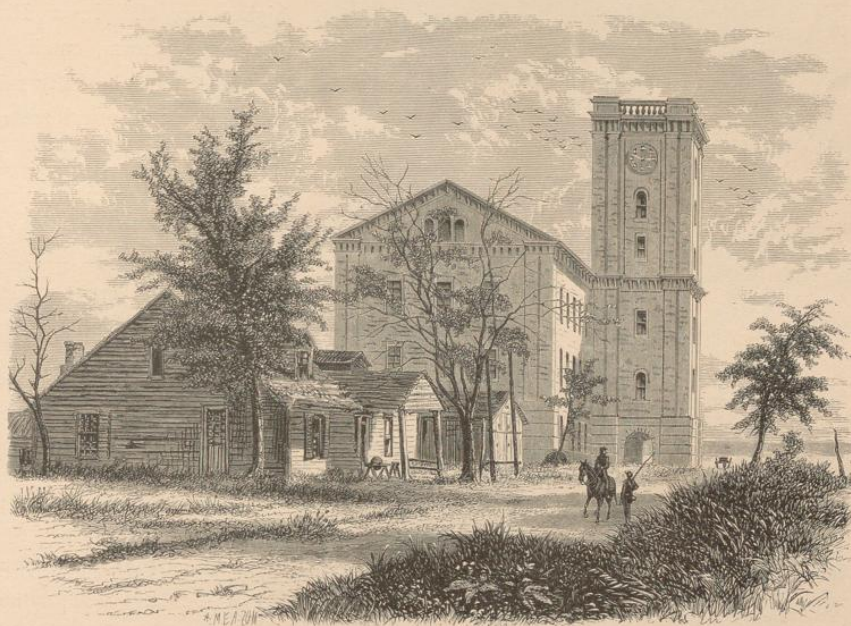
Group of Islets.

imagine that the country in the rear was of the level of the river, or nearly so; but it is not so, for the tops of the bluffs are on a line with the prairie-land beyond. The city of Keokuk is on the western bank, in the State of Iowa; and the city of Warsaw, in Illinois, is opposite to it. Close to Warsaw the Des Moines River falls into the Mississippi, forming what are known as the Des Moines Rapids. It is only in the fall of the



ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS.—DAVENPORT, IOWA.

year that these are perceptible, and at that season they offer some hinderance to freight-boats, but the packet-steamers pass through the troubled waters without the least difficulty. The scenery at this point begins to give a promise of what awaits the tourist higher up. The stream is of a deep-blue color, or rather appears so from contrast with the limestone-bluffs on each side. The islands begin to be more and more numerous. Sometimes there are clusters of islets, only a few rods in extent, close to the bank—forming, as it were, a little archipelago. The stream, in these sequestered nooks, loses the steady strength of its current, and seems to linger with fondness amid the pleasing scenes. The edges of the isles are fringed with broad-leaved rushes, and often with the



Old Arsenal, Rock Island.

purple iris. Lilies spread their broad, green pads over the smooth water, presenting every variety of blossom, fully opened, half opened, just opening, and simply in the bud. There are also the bright-yellow flowers of the water-bean. In such spots as this the trees upon the islands attain quite a respectable growth, the cotton-woods especially becoming very tall. Nearest the water's edge one sees generally willows and scrub-oak, the latter growing very thick and bushy. There is generally, at the extremity of the islands, a long spot of clear, white sand, which will grow into other islands if the current does not wash it away, which, however, it is sure to do sooner or later. Few can be considered permanent; some only flourish for a few brief years, and then are washed away;

but there are others, which have been formed near the shore, which become protected by sand-bars, and flourish exceedingly, until some sudden thaw in the spring sends down an avalanche of floating ice, and whelms them utterly.



Forrest-Roads, Rock Island.

Leaving behind Keokuk, the steamer resumes its gliding motion over the gentle Mississippi, and the never-ending panorama of water, islands, and bluffs, recommences. About seventy miles higher up, the Iowa River joins the stream, coming in on the left hand. Fifty miles of the same identical scenery, without a change, brings the traveller to one of the few features of this part of the river. Most of the islands in the Mississippi are temporary formations of sand; in fact, there are but three of rock; and we have now come to the largest and the most important, named Rock Island. It is three miles long, and has an area of nearly a thousand acres, the greater part of which is cleared, the rest being covered with fine forest-trees. The soil is, of course, limestone, and has been utilized for building government fortifications and arsenals of quite a formidable character. The old arsenal, of which a sketch is presented, was at one time the

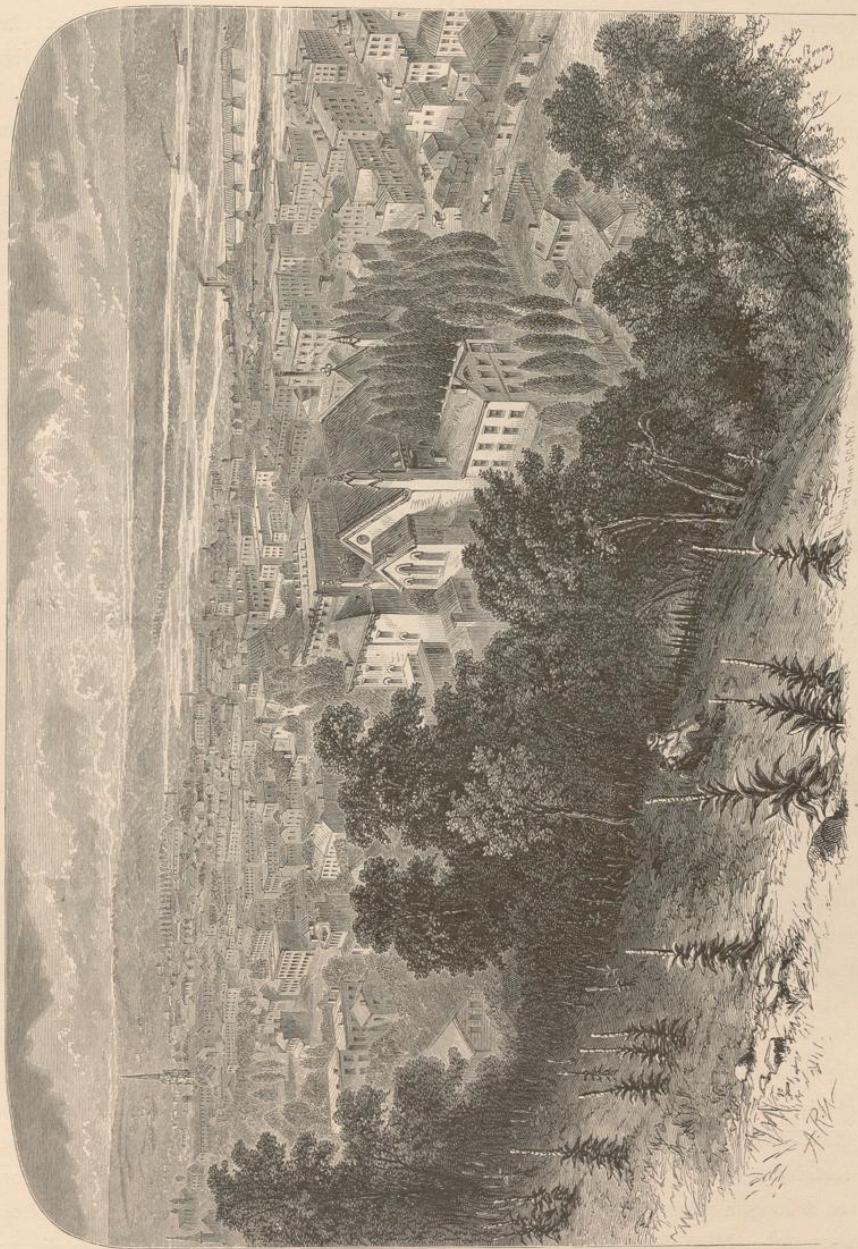
headquarters of the famous General Scott during the Black-Hawk War. This has long been abandoned, and has been replaced by limestone structures of the most enduring character; for here the United States has its armory headquarters, and the whole island



BRIDGES ON THE MISSISSIPPI, AT DUBUQUE.

has been developed, until it resembles, in the beauty of its drives and its military buildings, the station of West Point, on the Hudson, where the great military school of the nation is quartered. On the eastern bank, in Illinois, is the city of Rock Island. Opposite to it, on the other shore, is the city of Davenport, in the State of Iowa. These are both connected with the island by bridges, through which steamers pass by means of draws. These bridges were the first that spanned the Mississippi, and they met intense opposition from the steamboat-men, who hired gangs of desperadoes to burn them down as fast as the workmen erected them. But at last the cause of order triumphed, and the river-men consented to an act which they declared would forever ruin the commerce of the river. A candid and impartial mind will be forced to admit that the steamboat-party were not altogether in the wrong, for Nature here has done so much to obstruct navigation by rapids that the draw-bridges were really like putting the last straw on the camel's back. So powerful are the rapids here that in the fall freight-boats are sometimes prevented altogether from ascending, and it is easy to see that there might be seasons of water when a very little thing, such as the draw-bridges, would be sufficient to turn the scale against the boats. The passenger-packets feel the difficulty, but in a far less degree. It cannot be doubted that, within a few years, the railways will be compelled to pattern after the great St.-Louis Bridge invented by Captain James Eads, in which spans of cast-steel give an uninterrupted opening of over five hundred feet.

From the moment that we strike the rapids, we begin to notice a change in the bluffs. They are less hilly than heretofore, and they begin to become more like Cyclopean walls; their height, also, is greatly increased, and they are much lighter in color. The first effect upon the mind is unquestionably grand. The enormous masses of stone, which in their stratification resemble masonry, cannot but deeply impress the beholder. One marvels at the extraordinary regularity of the lines, and the conclusion comes upon one with irresistible force that there was a time when the water was on a level with these walls, three hundred feet high, and that the regular action of the river has exposed their strata with this seemingly strange uniformity. The Mississippi must be here about two miles wide, and is full of islands, which present every variety of form in their masses of vegetation. The water, on a fine summer's day, is perfectly clear, perfectly smooth, and all the indentations in the rocks, every streak of brown upon the whitish-gray sides, every boss protruding, every tuft of grass that has gained footing, every bush upon the slope at the base, every tree on the summit, are pictured in the cool shadows with undeviating fidelity. There is a mingling of the ideas of grandeur with those of rest and peace and happiness, which is inexpressibly pleasant; and there are few things in life more agreeable than to sit on the upper deck and watch the panorama that the river offers. Everywhere one gets delicious effects, specially where a curve in the river brings the trees of the islands sharply against the light background of the bluffs, or where the limestone-walls, receding, leave the islands in the centre, and

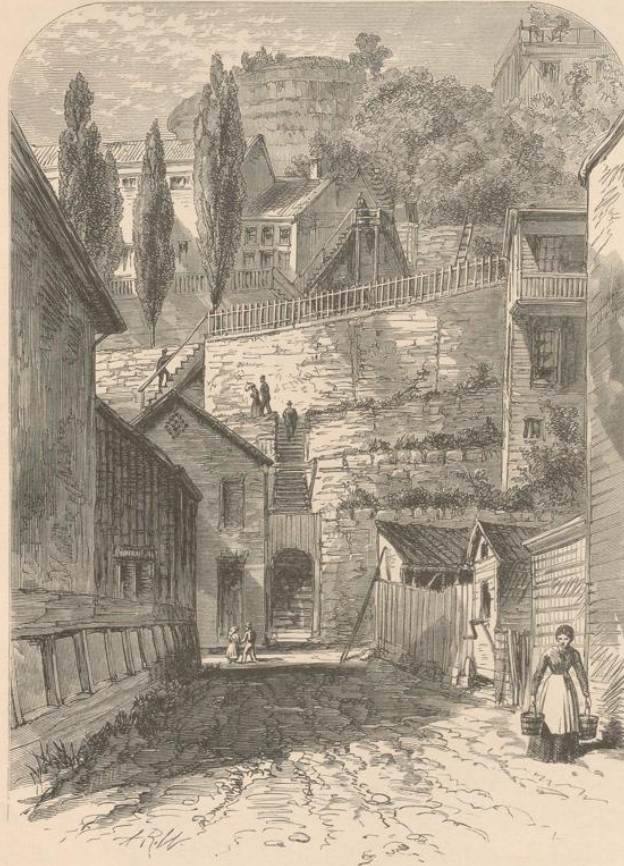


DUBUQUE, FROM KELLY'S BLUFF.

the tops of the cotton-woods are defined upon the blue sky. Nature harmonizes her blues and greens, if artists cannot. Then, it is pleasant to watch the working of her general law in the hills themselves. Sometimes, indeed, we see bluffs unsupported; but almost invariably there is a noble, perpendicular wall for two-thirds of the descent, and a great, sloping buttress of fragments for the remainder. It is on the latter that vegetation

thrives, though here and there we come to long stretches of bluffs that are made reddish brown in color by a covering of minute lichen.

As we approach Dubuque, three hundred and sixty miles from St. Louis, the rocks begin to be castellated, and, probably from some softness in the limestone, to be worn into varied shapes. But the full extent of this peculiarity is not seen until one passes Dubuque. Below that point the change is mostly manifested in the appearance of broad ledges at the top, that look like cornices, and in an occasional fragment of perpendicular structure, to both of which forms waving weeds and the long tendrils of wild-vines add a peculiar grace.



A Cross-Street in Dubuque.

At Dubuque the bluffs are nearly three hundred feet high, but they do not come sheer down to the water's edge, as at Alton, nor is there a long, sloping buttress; but at the base there is a broad level, about sixteen feet above the Mississippi. On this plateau are all the business-houses, the hotels, and the factories. Above, connected with paths that have been cut through the solid limestone, are the streets of the dwelling-houses.

The approaches to these upper houses are mostly by stairs that might easily be called ladders, without exposing one to a charge of being sarcastic; but it is worth the trouble of mounting these ladders a few times every day, to have such a landscape unrolled before the eye. There is a stretch of bare, sandy island in the centre of the river, across which comes the railway-bridge of the Illinois Central Railroad. There is, at the farther end of the island, a large shot-factory, and close to it the shot-tower, which darts up into the blue sky like a light flame. Beyond rise the bluffs of the eastern shore, which here are very hilly, and present beautiful contrasts of green verdure with glaring white. The tops of many are quite covered with a dense vegetation. Far beyond rolls the dreamy



Eagle Point, near Dubuque.

prairie, melting in the distance into the sky, which, blue above, becomes paler and paler as it nears the horizon, until it is an absolute gray. This is the outward look. The inward has plenty of quaint effects. There is an absolute confusion of lines. Here is a wall, there a stairway. Above that wall is a house, with more stairways. Then comes another wall, and perhaps another house, or a castellated mass of limestone, overlooking the architectural muddle. It is as quaint as any of the scenes in the old cities of Lombardy upon the slopes of the mountains, among the terraces cultivated with the grape, the olive, and the fig.

Just beyond Dubuque we come upon one of the landmarks of the pilots of the

upper river—Eagle Point, a splendid bluff, some five hundred feet high. The railroad from Dubuque to St. Paul runs upon the western side here, and continues to do so until it crosses at Hastings, a long way north. It runs at the base of the bluffs, and commands the picturesque points almost as well as the steamer. At this point the bluffs are unusually high and massive, presenting often another variety of mountain-form, in which the summit rolls down, as it were, and the perpendicular walls beneath seem like a short column supporting a monstrous dome. Eagle Point is not of this kind, however; but the sloping portion blends so gradually with the perpendicular that, to the eye, it seems one enormous wall, descending from the forest above to the water beneath. The



Buena Vista.

trees here attain a large size, and dot the champaign country that stretches far away on every side. Sometimes the cliffs have been so changed by the action of water as to produce those colossal sloping banks which are called "downs" in England, where not a particle of the limestone is visible, the whole being covered with a rich mantle of green. The effect of these downs is peculiarly pleasing in sudden turns of the river, when in the distance a portion of the Mississippi seems to be isolated, and fancy cheats us with the belief that the broad, gleaming sheet is the commencement of a romantic lake among the hills. Then these great roofs of green become a most exquisite background, more especially when the landscape is tamed down by a thin, silvery mist. Perhaps one of

the causes of this lake-like appearance is the comparative freedom of this part of the Mississippi from islands. There are small dots of green, willowy land here and there, but not in such numbers or proportions as to contract the view of large expanses of water. Right in the centre of this beautiful region is the little village of Buena Vista, which owes its name, and indeed its existence, to the appreciative taste of a Westerner who fixed his household-gods here in the centre of all that was lovely in Nature. The place is well known to pilots, because in the vicinity there is an outcropping of lower silurian, which resembles exactly ruins of some gigantic structure. It is not precisely an outcropping, because it has become visible by the washing away of the soil that concealed it. There is at its base an indescribable mass of fragments, round which creepers and wild-vines have twined themselves in picturesque confusion, and on each side of it the forest-trees grow in the greatest luxuriance. The ravines on each side are broad and



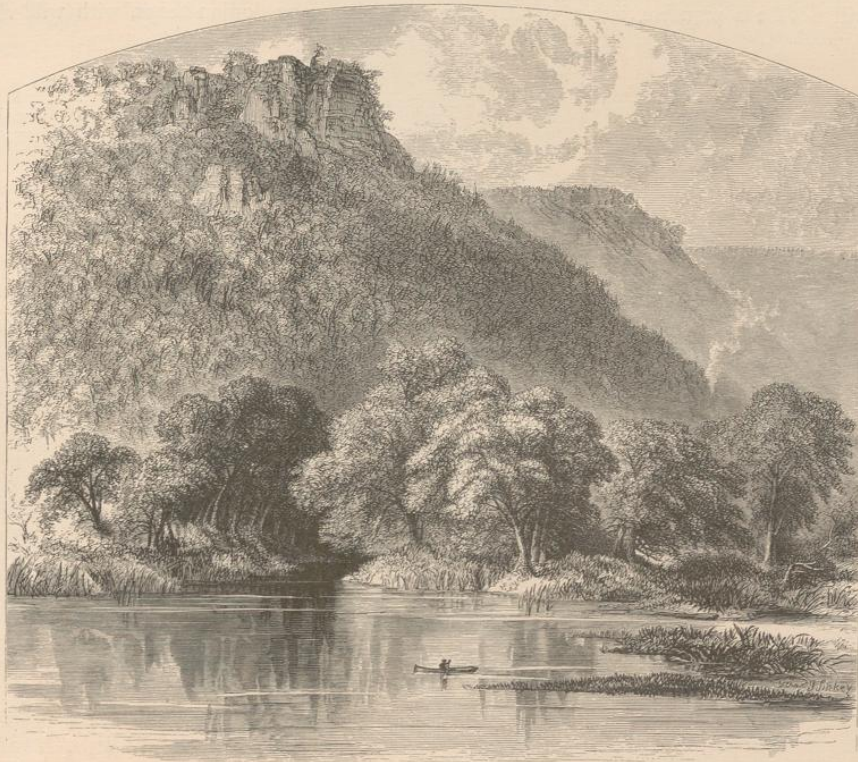
At the Mouth of the Wisconsin.



LA CROSSE, AND SCENERY ABOVE.

picturesque, but give no idea or suggestion of what the bluff was before it crumbled away, leaving, as it were, its skeleton visible.

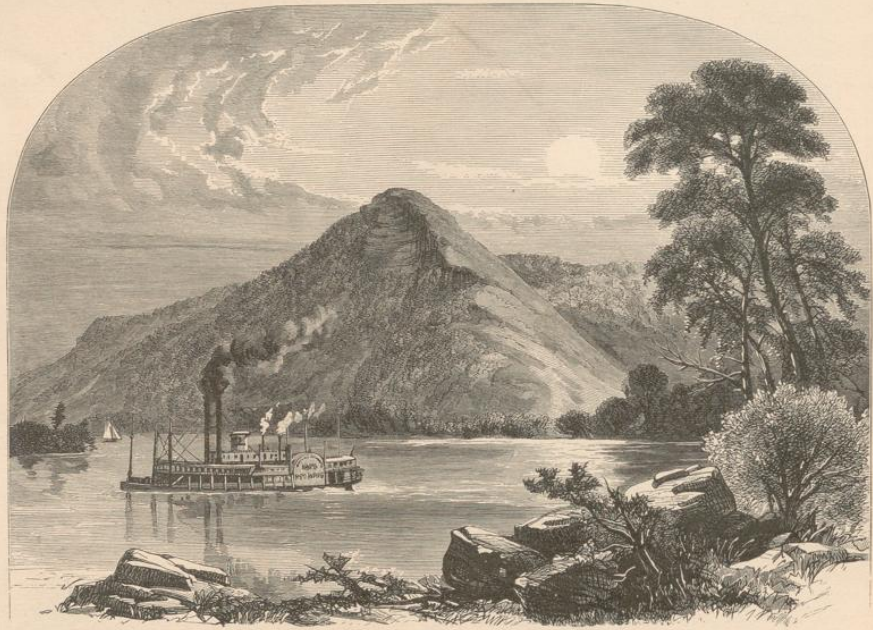
The mouth of the Wisconsin is broad, but the water is shallow, and the channel is obstructed by sand-bars, covered with rank vegetation. The bluffs here, on the opposite side, are covered with trees, and, both in their contour and general appearance, remind one very much of the hills along the western branch of the Susquehanna. On the western side we are still in the State of Iowa but the eastern shore belongs to Wisconsin,



Three Miles above La Crosse.

one of the great wheat-raising regions. All along the line of the river here, the towns have something to do with the traffic in cereals, but most of it is becoming concentrated in Dubuque. Somehow, whether it is imagination or not can scarcely be analyzed, but the air here seems purer and more bracing than it did below, yet the sun's rays are immensely powerful. The bluffs, that are directly exposed to the full force of the summer sun, are bare of vegetation as the palm of one's hand—masses of white rock. But, wherever a curve gives a shelter to vegetation, the trees spring up joyously to the blue

air, and the wild-vines hang their festoons around the fantastic spires and jutting cornices of the limestone. This is, in sober truth, an exquisite part of the river, from the greater variety of the scenery, the wooded hills, and the exquisitely pure character of the water, which is clear and limpid as that of Lake Lemman. The bluffs alternate from massive, deeply-wooded hills to long walls of limestone, with bases and huge cornices and bartizan towers, deep crypts, and isolated chimneys. Often, from the deep heart of the oaks and maples crowning a majestic bluff, starts up a skeleton splinter of bare lime, white as alabaster, in the pure air, a little reminder that the hill had been much higher. Sometimes it will not be a pinnacle, but a regular series of towers or donjon-keeps, with wild-vine



Queen's Bluff, below Trempealeau.

banners waving from the outer ramparts. In other places, the summits will be entirely denuded of timber, but will be covered with a bright mantle of emerald turf. In the ravines between, the trees are low, thick, and bushy, the very place for the covert of a deer, and one watches instinctively to see some motion in the leafy shade, and to detect the brown antlers of some leader of the herd. In the midst of these wonders there comes a break, where a little river pours its waters into the Father of Streams. A smiling prairie, level as a billiard-table, is spread on each side of the mouth for several miles. Here is the town of La Crosse, built upon the prairie where all the Indian tribes, for hundreds of miles around, used to have their great ball-playing, that game

which the French travellers called "la crosse," and which has given its name to this stirring city, bustling with manufactures, and noisy with the screams of locomotives. And still we are on the right bank of the river, and still in the State of Wisconsin; the opposite shore is in Minnesota, also a great grain and lumber mart. Here we begin to see big rafts coming down the stream, with often twelve men tugging away at the clumsy, huge oars, battling against the swift current. Above La Crosse, the valley of the Mississippi widens considerably, and the hills recede, leaving long slopes of upland, covered with noble trees. The river is perfectly studded with islands; in fact, one is never out of sight of them. They are all low, composed of alluvial soil, washings from the banks, and are covered with a dense growth of shrub-oak, from which occasional cotton-woods soar up to considerable height. Sometimes they are in the centre, sometimes they fringe the banks; but, in every position, they add greatly to the beauty of the scene.



Scenery below Trempealeau.



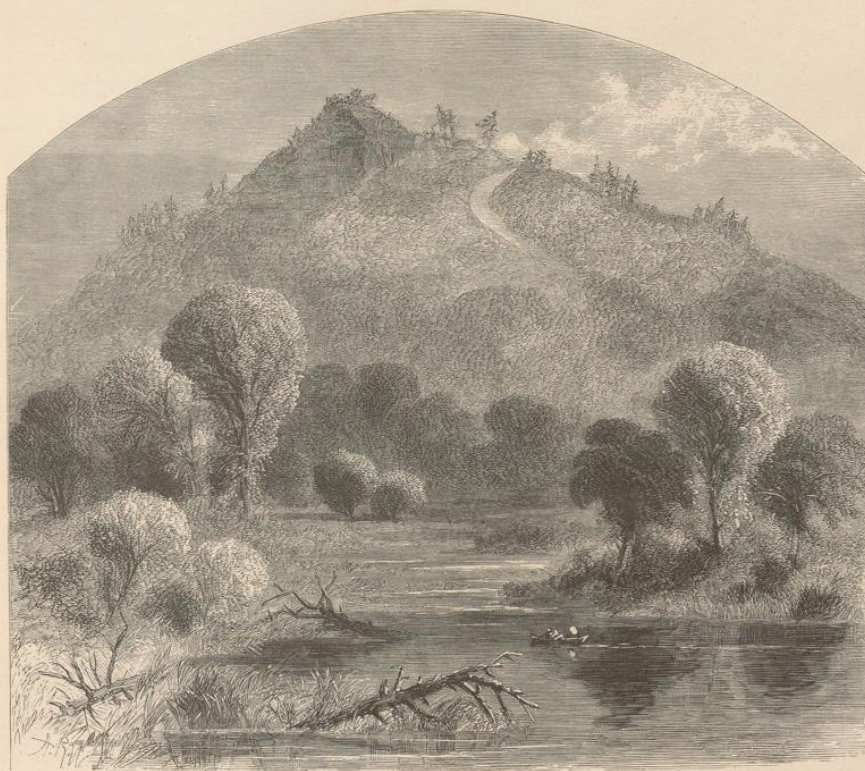
Approach to Trempealeau.

The bluffs here are, in many cases, over six hundred feet high, and of varied shapes, the pyramidal beginning to appear with persistent recurrence.

Queen's Bluff, a fragmentary pyramidal bluff, is one of the landmarks by which the pilots know that they are approaching the fairy region of Trempealeau. Queen's Bluff has not only been cleft in twain by the greater Mississippi of the past, but its face has been scooped out by the winds, and Nature has kindly filled up the gloomy void with fine trees. Its southern side is exposed directly to the noonday sun, and is a bare, precipitous mass of glaring white, without so much as a blade of grass to shade it from the sun's fierce kisses. There are great cracks in it, which are positively blue in shadow, from the intensity of the glare.

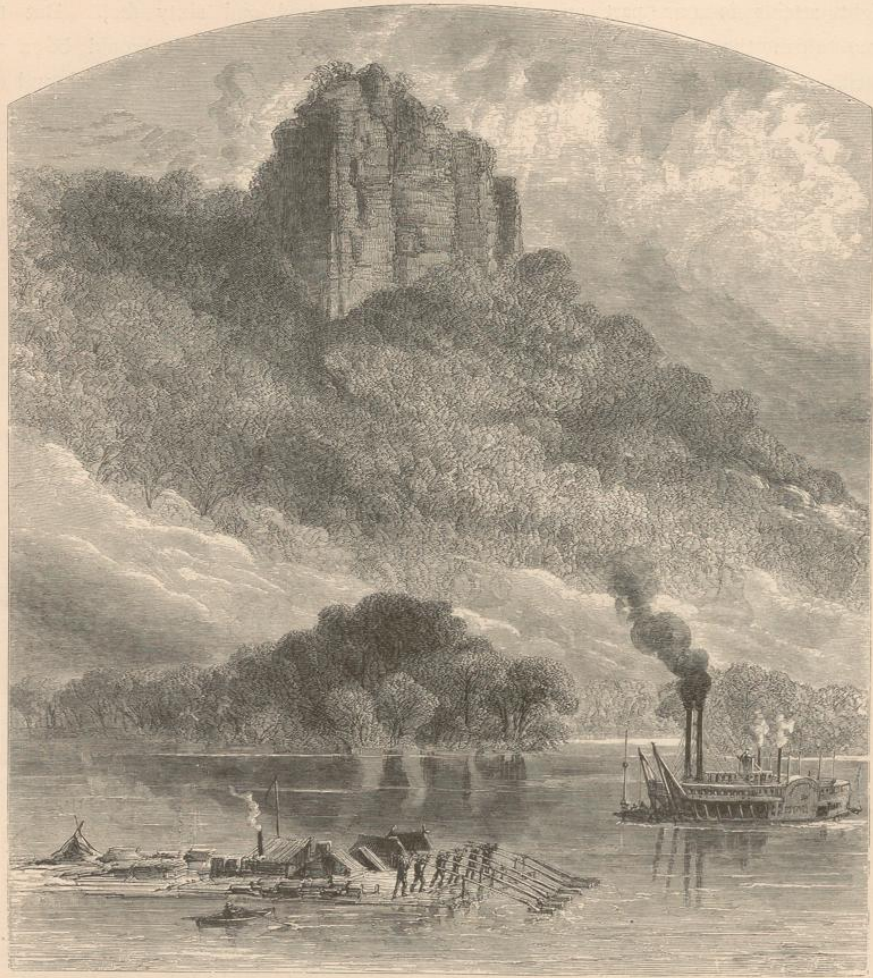
The steamboat glides onward over the glassy tide, and nears rapidly one of the three rocky islands of the Mississippi. The first was at Rock Island, the second is here at Trempealeau, about eighteen miles above La Crosse. It is sometimes called Mountain Island, for its rocky

height attains in one part an altitude of five hundred and sixty feet. But the name which the French *voyageurs* gave it is so poetical that it would be a sin to change it. It rises sheer out of the water in the centre of the channel, and the French called it "Mont qui trempe à l'eau" (Mountain which dips in the Water). Nothing can be conceived more beautiful than the approach to this most romantic and picturesque spot, which, in the writer's opinion, exceeds in positive beauty the far-famed scenery of Lake Pepin, twenty-five miles up the river. The river lies like a lake in the



Trempealeau Island.

bosom of the hills, which are so varied in beauty that they defy description. They do not present an amphitheatre of peaks, but are rather like an edging or the setting of emeralds around a diamond. Their forms offer every possible combination of picturesque lines, every known conformation of limestone-rocks, blended with ever-changing hues of green, from the deep tints of evergreens to the bright emerald of grassy plains. The river seems to sleep below, its placid surface giving back all the glorious beauty of its environing. The locomotive creeps at the base of the great bluffs, as if conscious of

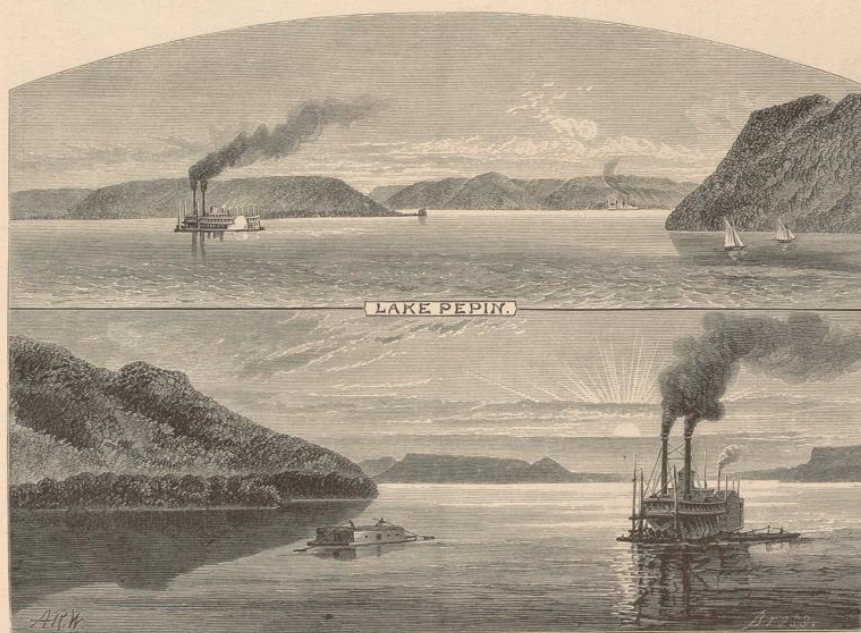


Chimney Rock, near Fountain City.

intrusion, and emits its whistle in a plaintive, deprecatory manner, that the hills echo and reëcho with increasing pathos. The islets that nestle around the huge form of Trempealeau are mostly covered with sedge-crashes, waving with the slightest puff of air. The mountain is by no means bare. There are parts which are covered by thick forests, growing with the greatest luxuriance on the steep ascent; and there are spaces where nothing but the barren rock is seen, with all its huge stratification exposed to view. Spots of the barren rock are covered with a minute lichen, which gives to the limestone a warm, rich effect, like red sandstone; in other spots it is dazzling white, like marble. There is a winding path up Trempealeau for those who care to make the ascent, and,

in autumn, the sides of this road are lined with berry-bushes. Nothing is more suggestive in the distance than this same winding foot-way, especially when behind it a golden-edged cloud of cumulus formation is slowly sailing by; then it seems a path to El Dorado, to the cities of elf-land, where, in silence, await the bold adventurer, beauteous maidens, in fountained courts, rich with the perfume of celestial flowers, and where birds sing strains of a sweetness never heard from mortal instrument, but akin to those divine airs that flit through the brain, as pitilessly beyond the grasp as the golden-cornered cloud itself. Trempealeau is a study for the painter, a theme for the poet, a problem for the geologist, a clew for the historian. Whosoever will study it with his soul rather than his wit shall not fail of exceeding great reward.

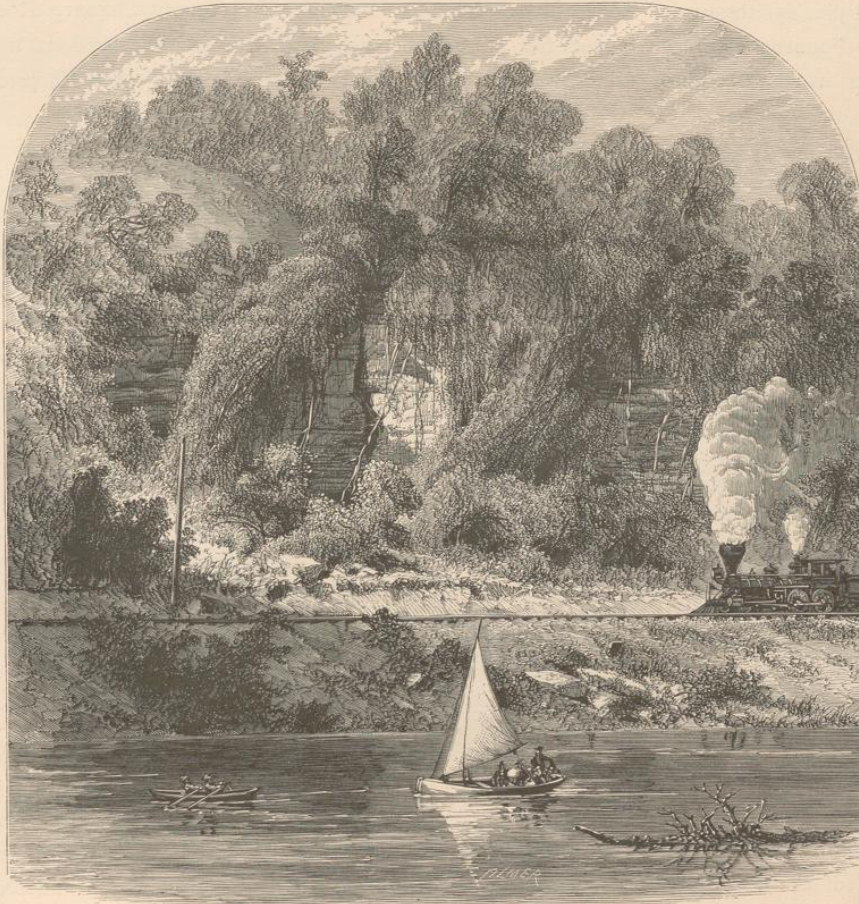
It is hard to say under what aspect Trempealeau looks the best—whether from the distance below, or from a nestling-place in the islets at its feet, or from the village of Trempealeau, five miles above. This little place ought to be visited by every painter and poet in America, and should become the headquarters of every one who loves the scenery of his country, during the summer months. It is a grief that Americans should wander off to the Rhine and the Danube when, in the Mississippi, they have countless Rhines and many Danubes. What does it matter if every peak along the former has the dismantled walls of some robber-baron's den? Is Drachenfels one whit more castellated than any of the nameless bluffs about and around Trempealeau? All that is beautiful in lake-scenery, in lower mountain-scenery, in river-scenery, is garnered here. The





MAIDEN'S ROCK, LAKE PEPIN.

great trees that line the bases of Trempealeau are worthy of the Titan that has nourished them, and develop such trunks, such branches, as do the eyes good to see. The little isles crouch at the foot of the mountain-island as if seeking protection from the rush of the spring waters or the live bolt of the storm. They are of every shape, and the combinations of their trees and their sedgy banks offer a thousand hints of beauty



Limestone Natural Walls, below St. Paul.

and suggestions of romance to the intelligent glance that takes them in. Sometimes the cotton-trees clump themselves as in a park; anon, by a few strokes of the oar, and in a trice, one gazes at a vista of branches through which, obscurely in the distance, one sees through the tremulous summer a great broad flank of darkened limestone. And the clear, limpid water that glides around them, and that laves the rocky sides of the grand

Trempealeau, gleams with such brightness, and glows so under the sunlight, and sleeps in silvery lengths under the moonlight, that one cannot but love it. In the distance, looking back regretfully from the village of Trempealeau, every cape and headland is softened, and the green hues of the forest-clad sides become a warmish gray, verging in blue. The little isles appear like dots of trees, springing up out of the silvery wave that spreads itself out in a dazzling sheet of reflected sunshine. And, if any one, after seeing these things, shall pine for the castled crags of the Rhine, let him come and survey Chimney Rock, near Fountain City, some twenty-five miles higher up. It is true that the hand of man never wrought at these things, but, for all that, it is the precise image of Chepstow



Near St. Paul.

Keep, in "merrie England," and is, to all intents and purposes, as much a castle as any ruin of the German river. The spectator who views this peculiar mass of limestone from above the river will fail to see why it received its name. But, from below, and passing abreast, one observes that the extreme mass on the right hand is altogether detached, and presents a very striking resemblance to the enormous stone chimneys which are built up *outside* the houses in Virginia. The castle rises from a dense growth of trees, mostly of maples, and at the base of the bluff there is a sort of natural terrace, very broad and even, which is free from vegetation of any kind, and looks not unlike the terrace of a proud palatine home. Below this is an accumulation of soil, washed

down by the river in spring tides, which has offered a resting-place to wandering seeds. These have grown into a belt of scrub-oak, very low and very compact, forming a pleasant foreground to the scene above.

We now approach Lake Pepin, the first glimpses of which are truly charming. The Mississippi here swells into a large expanse of water, in some parts five miles across, and this widening extends for twenty-five miles. By many this region is considered the finest that the river affords, but most artists will decide for the vicinity of Trempealeau. The water here is very deep, and, in the summer-time, is so calm, so unruffled, so still, that one cannot discern with the eye any appearance of a current. So easily do the side-wheel steamboats pass through the water that they seem to be moving through air, so gentle and equable are the pulsations. And it is really an annoyance to be passed by a stern-wheeler; the great machine in the rear tosses the water about and churns it into foam, destroying the serene impressions that had been left upon the mind. Looking northward, on entering the lake, one observes a high rocky point on the left shore, elevating itself like a sentinel of a fairy host guarding the entrance to the enchanted land. In the mid-distance another promontory of high and menacing aspect juts out into the lake, concealing from view the sweep of the upper end of the lake, which here makes a bold curve to the eastward. A superb amphitheatre of bluffs encloses the lake, many of which have an elevation of five hundred feet. These present every variety of form, some of them being square masses, like the keep of an old castle; others flow out in a series of bosses; others are angular, others conical. Here, in one direction, is a pyramid, with numerous depressions and ravines mottling the white mass with veins of shadow; and here, in another, is a vertical wall, with perfect mouldings of cornices and plinths. Anon, steals into the view a gently-sloping mound, covered with herbage and trees. All of these does the delicate-hued surface of the lake reflect with perfect fidelity, excepting that the light objects are elongated, and their outlines are lost; but the dark, stern capes are given back with scrupulous exactitude, line for line, bush for bush, mass for mass.

This is Lake Pepin in a calm. But this daughter of the hills is not always in a good-humor, and, when her waves are ruffled by the angry winds, she rages with a fury that is by no means innocent. Its vicinity to St. Paul makes it a favorite resort for those who are fond of boating, and the surface in the summer is often dotted with the white sails of miniature yachts. These have a hard time in stormy weather, for the waves are very high and very short, and succeed each other with a rapidity which makes steering almost impossible. Many a sailing-boat has been dashed by the mad waters right into the forests that here, in every direction, come sloping down to the water's edge. In all the little villages nestling in the amphitheatres of the lake, there are stories of such disasters, though they never yet taught prudence to any one. The great tradition of death and sorrow belongs to Maiden's Rock. The tale of Winona's tragical suicide



ST. PAUL, FROM DAYTON'S BLUFF.

has been widely circulated, but it is so much a part of Lake Pepin's attraction that it cannot be passed over in silence. Winona was a young girl of that confederacy, named by itself Dah-co-tah, which the French called Sioux, but whose real name is Tetone. She loved a hunter of the same division of the confederacy, but her parents wished her to marry a warrior of the Wapesha division, and, by threats and actual blows, extorted from her a promise of compliance. The day before the union she ascended a bluff of great height, whose upper part is a sheer precipice, and began chanting her death-song. Soon the base was surrounded by the tribe, and all those who possessed any influence over the girl shouted to her to descend, and that all should be well. She shook her head in disbelief, and, breaking off her song, upbraided them bitterly, not only for wishing to marry her against her will, but for their folly in preferring the claims of a warrior, who did nothing but fight, to those of a hunter, who fed the tribe. Then she continued her interrupted chant, and threw herself, at its conclusion, from the height, being dashed to pieces in the great buttress of rocky *débris* below.

Frontenac is in the centre of the lake-region, and is left behind with veritable regret. When we get once more into the river it seems quite narrow, though this is the effect of contrast. At Hastings, the railroad which has hitherto faithfully accompanied us on the left side makes a change to the other shore, just in the region of the limestone walls. These are not very high, but they produce a forcible impression by their length and regularity. The bluffs rise over them in great green domes, and often large trees crown their ledges; but there are spots where, for miles upon miles, these walls stand alone, unadorned by vegetation—white, glaring, and monotonous. Still, there is a quiet strength and sternness about this formation, which impress some organizations more forcibly than actual beauty, and the spots where these ramparts are partially covered with great trailing wild-vines are indeed highly picturesque. The river-scenery at this point is essentially lovely. There is a multiplicity of islands, showing every possible massing of vegetation, and, in many cases, the bluffs are quite low, and admit a broad view of woodland and prairie. The effect is park-like, and, when a powerful sun pours upon the scene a flood of light, nothing more softly beautiful can be imagined. Looking northward in the distance, we obtain faint glimpses of St. Paul; but it is impossible to get a good view of this picturesque city from the river. This is the getting-off place, the end of navigation on the Mississippi, and therefore every one is sure of being able to go to Ball's Bluff, or, better still, to Dayton's Bluff, on the east side of St. Paul, where, with one sweeping glance, the eye takes in the city, its towers, and its elevators, the railroad-bridges, the opposing rocky shores, and the graceful curve of the river.

The chief attraction, of a picturesque nature, in this vicinity, however, is not upon the Mississippi, but on the little Minnehaha River, an outlet of Lake Minnetonka, whose waters are poured into the Minnesota not far from the junction of that river



FALLS OF MINNEHAHA.

with the Mississippi. The famous falls here are by no means what one would imagine from the poem of Longfellow. There is but little water, yet what there is is more admirable at its lowest than at its highest volume. For the chief beauty of the fall is in the crossing of the delicate spiral threads of water, producing an effect which reminds one of fine lace. About two hundred feet below there is a bridge, and, as this is only thirty feet long, it will assist the reader in forming a correct idea of the proportions of this somewhat too famous cataract. The gorge is elliptic in form from the centre of the falls to the bridge, and quite narrow everywhere. The depth is about sixty feet. On each side of the top of the falls are numerous birch-trees, and the summits of the gorge crowned with various forest-trees. Below the bridge, the bluffs or banks on each side cease to be precipitous, and come sloping down to the water's edge, with all their trees, the branches of many actually dipping into the brink. The veil of the fall-



Minnepolis, St. Anthony, and St. Anthony's Falls.

ing water is so thin that one can see the rock behind it. There is a good path behind, which even ladies can follow, except when the wind blows directly opposite, when the adventurous traveller would get well drenched.

By rail from St. Paul to St. Anthony, on the Mississippi River, the distance is about ten miles, and every pilgrim in search of the picturesque ends his journey here. Minneapolis is on one side of the river, and the city of St. Anthony on the other. The falls can be seen with equal advantage from either side, though, if one wants to try both views, the suspension-bridge enables one to do so with perfect ease. The rapids above the cataract are very fine, in fact much finer than the fall itself, for the river is broad above, nearly seven hundred feet wide, and, within the last mile, makes a descent of fifty feet. As the falls are only eighteen feet, they often disappoint the spectator, more especially as commerce has interfered with them, and converted them into water-power, second only to that of Rocky Island at Moline. The rapids are in reality splendid, even in the summer-time. The jostling waters heave up great surges several feet high, from which the wind strikes sheets of spray. In the centre there is a broad, well-defined mass of water, like a ridge, elevated over the stream on each side. Furious eddies boil and circle in this with a deep, gurgling sound, and, when a pine-tree comes down, it goes under, and comes shooting up into the air hundreds of feet below, but with every particle of bark stripped off, and great splinters wrenched from the hard wood by the battling currents underneath. Just above the fall, on the very verge, the waters steady themselves for the leap, but, before that, the waves cross and recross, and stagger with blind, furious haste. The best view seems to be from the centre of the suspension-bridge, for there you can see the grand rapids, and do not see the dams and factories on either side. Looking up the falls, however, you do gain something, for you have a full view of the extraordinary piles of limestone-slabs forced off by the united action of the currents and the ice. These are heaped in many places along the shore with the greatest regularity. The slabs are like the tops of tables, many of them as smooth as possible, this being the distinguishing characteristic of limestone-cleavage. And, the force of the water being in one direction below the falls, the slabs are not broken in the descent, but are gently left by the receding waves along the shore in regular rotation. Still, from this point of view, the dams and other obstructions are too plainly in sight, and, though they cannot make one forget the immense volume of the river that comes leaping onward, yet they do destroy all the romance and much of the beauty of the water-fall.